THE ANDOVER VISION

As citizens of Andover, we are grateful to those in the past who nurtured the attractive, well managed, and vibrant town that we enjoy today. At the same time, we are mindful of our current stewardship and the fragile nature of much that we cherish. We have confidence that the most promising approach to the future is to acknowledge and act upon the values that we share. This is our Vision and our hopes and commitments for the Andover of the future. *The Vision 21 Committee – July 26, 2004*

QUALITY EDUCATION

We will offer a rich and challenging public education that builds essential skills and knowledge that support a broad range of academic and vocational options, enable successful participation in our society and culture, and sustain curiosity and learning in a world of new and ever changing opportunities. We will cultivate the public library as a resource for lifelong learning and enrichment and as facilitator for the flow of information throughout the community. We will find ways to protect the quality of these institutions through fluctuating economic cycles.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

We will continue to acquire and protect open space as a crucial natural resource that helps to maintain the character of the town, offers access to both active and passive recreation, and provides an important natural system for water recharge, flood control, and wildlife habitat.

VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

We will maintain our downtown as an attractive and vibrant center with a mix of commercial and public activities, historical elements, and parks. We will use permits, zoning guidelines, and planning approvals to attract and keep pedestrian-friendly street-level enterprises.

SMALL-TOWN CHARACTER

Even as the Town continues to grow, we will actively seek to identify and preserve those elements — town layout and scale, central focus, community-wide activities, respect for historical structures, and residential mix that give Andover its small-town character.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

We will govern ourselves in a manner that encourages participation by all, that consistently provides adequate information for making informed choices, and that acts to preserve our investment and the interests of the community as a whole. We will acknowledge the needs of others and consider compromises that are in the best interest of the Town and region.

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

We will maintain strong and consistent zoning that protects historic buildings and places, and we will support the institutions that protect and promote Andover's historical heritage.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

We will be respectful of Andover's many races, ethnicities, religious beliefs, and lifestyles. We will facilitate public events that celebrate diversity and provide opportunities for sharing cultural traditions. As a community, we will not tolerate acts of hatred or persecution.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

We will follow prudent financial practices that balance consistent high-quality services, private vs. public responsibility, stable tax rates, and responsible levels of debt. We will set ambitious goals but live within our means. In making financial decisions, we will include an understanding of long-term costs and consequences, particularly to the environmental integrity of the Town. We will consider regional partnerships that offer more effective and economical options, and we will manage the impact of our decisions on property values relative to similar communities.

HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We will protect public health and safety through careful monitoring and enforcement of environmental, health, and safety regulations and by continuing to provide effective and responsive fire and police protection and beneficial public health services.

MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

We will manage and protect our natural resources, particularly water, in a manner that acknowledges our responsibility to future generations and to other communities that share those resources. We will monitor air quality and take measures to mitigate negative effects of emissions from vehicles, regional incinerators, and industrial facilities.

TOWN SERVICES

We will provide effective and efficient services that build and maintain Town infrastructure, handle Town business, and assist citizens. We will use technology to facilitate interdepartmental communication and efficiency, and to provide public access to Town information.

HUMAN SERVICES

Through our department of community services, other Town programs, and religious institutions, we will sponsor services and programs, facilities, outreach, and recognition to veterans, seniors, youth, and the disabled or disadvantaged among us. We will foster connections among all citizens to help us to appreciate, learn from, and support one another.

TRANSPORTATION

We will monitor changing commuting patterns and side-effects on air and water quality, noise, and traffic. We will work within the region to strengthen opportunities for regional transit, rail travel, commuter buses, and improved connections with mass transit hubs. We will seek solutions to local needs for downtown and commuter parking, for safe and efficient traffic flow, and for shuttle service to local facilities and services. We will encourage foot and bicycle travel as an alternative to automobiles, whenever feasible.